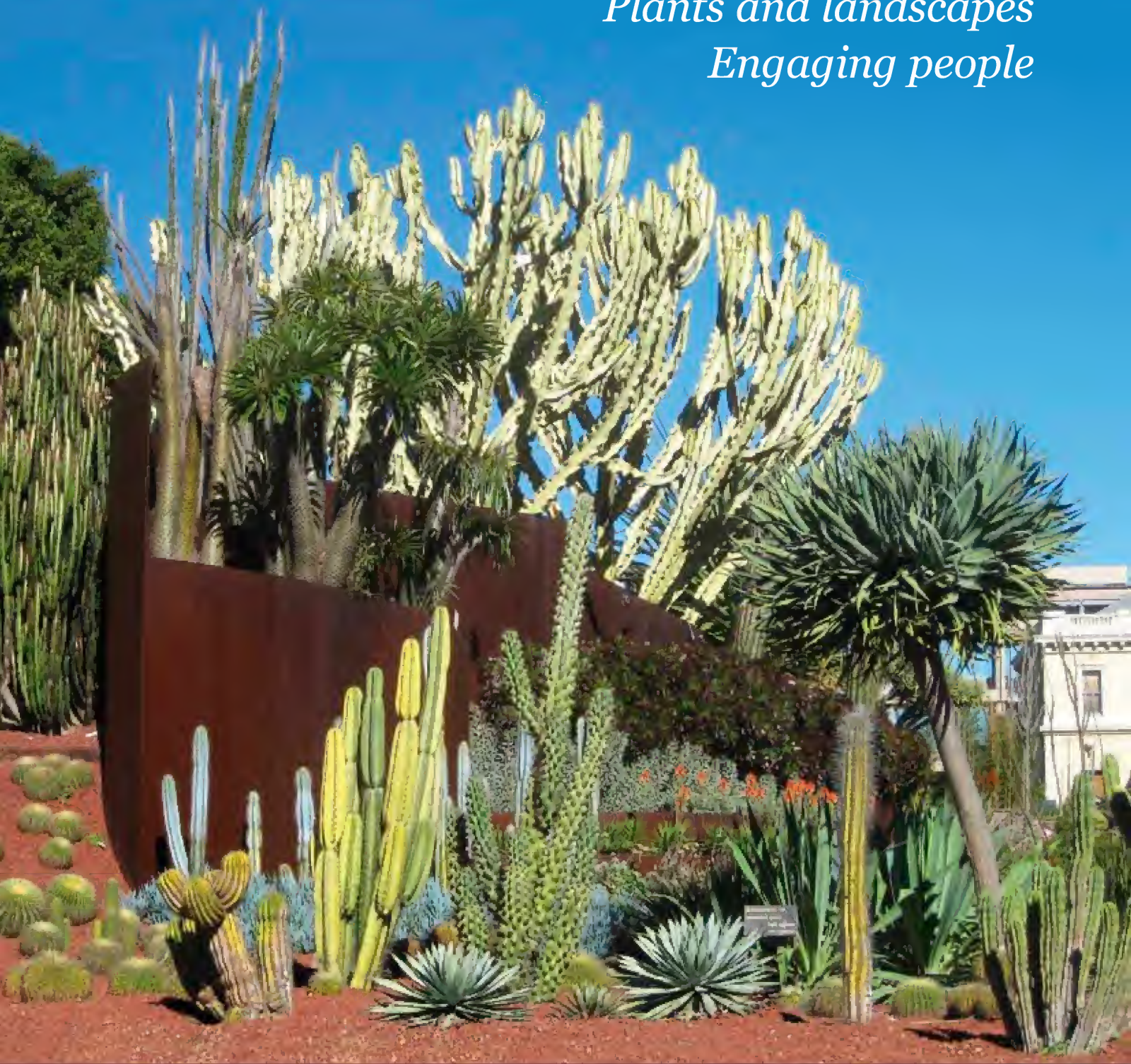


# Australian Garden HISTORY

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*Conserving garden heritage  
Plants and landscapes  
Engaging people*



JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY





**Cover:** Botanic gardens—those arks of the plant world—provide many fine examples of conservation embracing natural as well as cultural values, seen here in the refurbished cactus and succulent garden of the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney. Photo: Richard Aitken

**Above:** Rangiriri Pā, 6am, 20 November 2012—the 149th dawn commemoration for the battle of Rangiriri and the unveiling of the Tohu Maumahara (Symbol of Remembrance), the remnant earthworks from the historic fortifications seen between these Pōhutukawa tree branches. The original fortifications at Rangiriri Pā, designed by Tainui chief Te Wharepu, formed an entrenched parapet with trenches on either side followed the line of the ridge and extended along a strip of land that stretched from the Waikato River to Lake Kopuera. Photo: Amy Hobbs

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The views expressed in this journal are those of the contributors and are not necessarily shared by the Australian Garden History Society.

# Breathing new life into garden conservation

Tim Richardson

'Conservation' is the respectable term used today for a range of activities that were formerly described as 'restoration', 'preservation' and even, back in the dim and distant past, 're-creation'. Nowadays the word 'conservation' can be applied to the day-to-day management of a 'designed landscape' (which is what we now call a 'garden' or 'landscape garden'), and might also indicate a level of restoration or reinstatement of key features. A professional approach to garden conservation demands the employment of a landscape consultant, who will be asked to come up with a 'conservation management plan' (CMP), to include an overview of the history of the place as well as its current status. Archaeologists may also be brought in, and the local community's opinions canvassed to encourage a sense of 'ownership' among 'stakeholders', also expedient as a means of securing funding from public bodies and then marketing the result.

*terminology, and ... the use of archaeological evidence, can create a spurious veneer of 'scientific objectivity' ... the idea that if all the correct research is done, then the result will necessarily be 'authentic'*

An undercurrent of scepticism may be detectable with regard to the jargon enumerated above. That is because such terminology, and especially the use of archaeological evidence, can create a spurious veneer of 'scientific objectivity' in relation to the conservation process—the idea that if all the correct research is done, then the result will necessarily be 'authentic'. This was the term applied recently by English Heritage to its restoration of the Tudor garden at Kenilworth Castle, where the key documentary resource was not visual, but an eloquent letter. Whatever its considerable charms, of course the result at Kenilworth cannot be said to be 'authentic'—the new garden is as redolent of our own times as it is of the 16th century; it's just that in our own age we seem reluctant to admit to this. At least the Victorians, for example, were cheerfully honest about the pastiche medieval and 17th-century gardens they reconstructed, informed as much by poesy as by supposedly hard facts. The knot garden at Ham House, in London, which was restored in the 1970s just as professionalised garden history was getting into its stride, is now seen as 'incorrect'—but it is looked upon as a valuable piece of garden history in its own right, since it heralded the orgy of garden restoration undertaken by the National Trust in the 1980s and 1990s (which has now largely come to a grinding halt). We are well into the era of restoring restorations.

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Perhaps all the above sounds like a rejection of the idea of garden conservation or 'restoration'. Far from it. It is wonderful to see gardens restored to something like their former glory—the last I saw was the Swiss Garden in Bedfordshire, perhaps the finest Regency garden survival in Britain. But we must be cautious about the claims we make for new work done at historic gardens, whatever the quality of the research underpinning it. We must also be careful not to rush in and restore in a hurry—sometimes the magic of a garden can be dispelled by well-meaning conservation activity. That is why when I was asked for a view on the great Baroque garden at Villa Gamberaia, outside Florence, I counselled repair as opposed to full-on restoration. Crumbliness has its own power. The ghosts disappear when the diggers arrive.

*The great strength of these gardens ... is that in most cases they were created and developed by one personality, one imagination, and once that person is gone, the soul, tone, and texture of the garden goes too*

There is one area where I would like to see the end of all funded attempts at 'authentic restoration'. That is the realm of what might be termed, somewhat drily, '20th-century flower gardening'. This is in fact what most people think of as 'gardens', full stop. The great strength of these gardens—and the greatest problem for restorers and conservers alike—is that in most cases they were created and developed by one personality, one imagination, and once that person is gone, the soul, tone, and texture of the garden goes too. Herbaceous perennials die back every year and the garden must be largely remade; that is part of the point. But it makes it impossible to recreate what has gone before, let alone make all the small decisions and fine-tunings evident in a great flower garden. Think of Sissinghurst without Vita, or Great Dixter without Christopher. In such cases it is far better to encourage a new 'genius of the place' to take over and make the garden a reflection of their own personality, albeit paying due respect to the work and character of previous incumbents. Otherwise all we are doing is asking professional gardeners to engage in the equivalent of 'method acting'—encouraging them to think their way into the mindset of someone from another time, very often from a social milieu that has been altogether lost. The result is a guestimate of dubious historical (and sometimes horticultural) value. What about allowing today's head gardeners to express themselves, largely unfettered by the past?

I have suggested this new approach to the National Trust on many occasions over the past decade, and have got into all sorts of trouble as a result. At one point an NT grandee wrote to the director-general demanding my removal from the Trust's gardens advisory panel. But I still seem to be there. And I note that the new head gardener of Sissinghurst has engaged designer Dan Pearson to help him breathe new life—genuinely new life, not restored life—into a garden that had grown a little stale in the years since its creator's death. There is a place for restoration, but we must be careful about the claims we make for it, and also know when to leave well alone.

---

**Tim Richardson** is a garden historian and contemporary landscape critic, the author of several books and a columnist in the *Daily Telegraph*. He is a trustee of the Garden History Society and founder-director of the Chelsea Fringe Festival (which is to have a Melbourne 'satellite' in May–June 2015). His essay 'Festival Gardens as Laboratory of Ideas' appears in the recently published book *Taylor Cullity Lethlean: making sense of landscape*.



Jane Lennon

## *Conservation of significant gardens*

Conservation of Australia's garden heritage gained momentum in the 1980s, but more now needs to be done to protect this significant resource.

### *Setting the scene*

Foreign firs and spruces silhouetted in swirling mists were my introduction to historic garden assessments at Alton on Mount Macedon. As a member of the historic buildings committee of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) we were inspecting a suite of gardens and their associated houses. This followed on from assisting Peter Watts in his inspections of Western District properties during the mid 1970s, where National Trust members had family connections and where architect and historian Mollie Turner Shaw taught me about English garden styles in these homestead gardens.

The National Trust landscape committee had been established in 1973 and took a regional approach identifying and evaluating landscapes

on the Mornington Peninsula and Western Port, the Dandenongs, Mount Macedon, and North Eastern Victoria. These listings assisted the Trust in its submissions to government planning policies on public exhibition and in town planning appeals. Not surprisingly I came to know many historic gardens and their styles as well as their constituent historic plants. Dr Jim Willis from the National Herbarium of Victoria always identified any plants that could not be named on site; landscape architect Ron Rayment sketched garden or landscape outlines; George Wright, forester and town planner, Winty Calder, botanist, and Joan Dixon, zoologist, all contributed to the identification of landscape components; while Warwick Forge was our secretary and photographer, and tried to manage our energetic but peripatetic chairman, Dewar Goode. Both Professors Carrick Chambers and George Seddon were members at different times.

It was exciting touring, discussing, and trying to survey the stock of Victoria's gardens and landscapes. The collegiate atmosphere spiced

Jane Lennon on a recent visit to Woodlands, a culturally significant estate at Bulla on Melbourne's north-eastern outskirts for which she oversaw pioneering conservation work commencing in 1975.

Photo: Rory Lennon



with new discoveries and historical research made for enjoyable weekly meetings after work and a feeling of adding to the rapidly expanding knowledge of Australia's heritage and the 'things we want to keep'. I was senior planning officer of the National Parks Service of Victoria from 1973 and travelled around Victoria frequently, so I always had a swag of Trust nominations to check for the existing condition of the site as I drove through country towns or passed old lanes and obvious sites of abandoned settlements, and of course one had one's favourite lookouts for the expansive views en route.

It was a time of great change with new legislation protecting historic buildings and their settings (including gardens), developing an extended range of public parks, establishing an archaeological survey, collecting government archives, and expanding the role of regional galleries and museums. There were also new regional planning policies following the Hamer government's commitment to the Garden State concept in 1976.

At the national level, the Australian Heritage Commission had been established in 1974 to identify and protect the National Estate. Australia ICOMOS (International Council for Monuments and Sites) was formed to establish professional standards for conservation work that resulted in the Burra Charter, so named because the Australian committee ratified its draft charter in the historic mining town of Burra in South Australia in 1979. The Australian Heritage Commission adopted this charter and its guidelines to assist in the nation-wide task of identification and assessment of places for conservation of their cultural significance.

### The Burra Charter

Conservation is defined as all those processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance and this includes maintenance, preservation, restoration, reconstruction and adaptation and commonly a combination of more than one of these.

Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present, or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings,

records, related places, and related objects. Thorough research from multiple sources and site documentation precede evaluation and assessment of significance; once this has been established, policies to conserve the significant components of the whole can be worked out and then a plan to implement the conservation of the site compiled. Funds and a willingness to act are then required.

In 1980 the first Australian garden history conference—at which the Australian Garden History Society was formed—was held in Melbourne and embraced the issues of identification, research, and conservation management. This followed on from Howard Tanner and Richard Springer's wonderful exhibition, *Converting the Wilderness: the art of gardening in colonial Australia*, which was the first serious attempt to assemble a nation-wide view of historic gardens illustrating the adjustment of European sensibility to Australian environments. The AGHS also published simplified guidelines, based on the Burra Charter, for the preparation of conservation plans for historic gardens in 1983.

### Management

Management of significant gardens as well as their status needed to change. In a 1983 paper for the Ministry for Planning and Environment I highlighted the divided and inconsistent management of government-owned gardens ranging from regional botanic gardens reserved under the *Crown Land Reserves Act* and managed by local committees often local shire councils, to more recently acquired gardens run by various government agencies such as Werribee Park, Pirianda, Churchill Island, and Coolart, and those run by the National Trust as committee of management for government-acquired lands such as Gulf Station. The Burra Charter and its guidelines for practice provided for a uniform approach to conservation studies (or analyses as they were originally called) of gardens. But management by a range of committees led to diverse approaches. Slowly during the 1980s individual gardens were subject to conservation studies often funded by the National Estate Grants Program or the managing agency, such as the City of Williamstown funded conservation study of Williamstown Botanic Gardens in 1985–86.

My own experience was sharpened by my responsibility for Woodlands, an historic property with a rare prefabricated house (1843) and garden, acquired in 1977 for the National Parks Service initially as a regional park. The courtyard contained four original *Magnolia grandiflora* trees planted by Anne Greene in June 1843,

The rose garden at Woodlands.  
Photo: Jane Lennon



while the outside garden and tree planting within the homestead boundary fencing dated from the 1890s era with a later rose garden for Cowra Chaffey planted by Alistair Clark of nearby Glenara. Research by Jillian Le Patoruel and detailed planting plans by ranger Andrew Govanstone led to restoration of the garden in 1985–86. Fortunately we were able to follow the Burra Charter process of establishing the significance of the various periods and not pull everything out to return to an 1840s garden, which would have been hypothetical with only the original magnolias remaining, although Anne's daughter Mary Elizabeth Greene (Lady Stawell) documented other plantings and a vineyard producing red wine by 1847.

The Burra Charter and its associated conservation planning process enjoyed nation-wide acceptance as the professional principles for cultural heritage conservation because adherence to it was a perquisite for receiving any government heritage grants. But the process of establishing significance also teased out the full range of values to be considered in planning and management. In the last decade however, with calls for small government, doing away with red and 'green' tape, codes for minimal assessment of proposals and their environmental impact, careful conservation planning has suffered. So we find the Australian Garden History Society as well as others fighting to save the King George V memorial avenue of oaks at Tamworth, but little outrage expressed at the loss of historic views by overly tall high rise developments from World Heritage-listed Parramatta Park, a designed cultural landscape.

Vibrant community groups fought battles to save gardens like Rippon Lea and agitated for heritage legislation, but the public has perhaps been lulled into thinking that this is enough to protect significant places. Meanwhile the Greens seem to have captured the public attention, emphasising the natural environment and in particular rainforests, which were diminishing at a rapid rate but are now all protected and even extending their range in the absence of fire. Ironically, many historic gardens feature rainforest species made popular by W.R. Guilfoyle and mid-nineteenth-century gardeners. We must remain vigilant to protect cultural as well as natural values.

Most local government areas in Australia have now undertaken biodiversity surveys but given the nature of training of our professionals, they cannot fully read the field evidence of historic activities. An environmental surveyor will document a stately

red gum, home to arboreal mammals and migratory passerines, but fail to see the clump of araucarias and cordylines or yuccas as obvious clues from a colonial garden. Today even in historic garden management, people are appointed without a proper apprenticeship to some more experienced person who knew and had a feel for the original spirit of the garden in its original design, layout, planting, succession of growth, and seasonal variations, and who would willingly pass on this knowledge.

We are well placed; we have a well-tested charter, we have legislation. But if we lack humble attention to the evidence of our heritage in gardens—the most designed of our cultural landscapes—then we are failing in our objective of conserving these gardens. The Australian Garden History Society needs to sponsor more debate and discussion following the guidance of the various inventories and get all members involved in a watching eye on historic gardens in their neighbourhood. More and better professional training is needed for all those nurserypersons busy selling plants on weekends as ignorant gardeners pull out old species and replace them with the latest cultivars and fads and all the landscape firms busy in the suburbs often unsympathetically redesigning old gardens—typically on subdivided blocks—to be more water efficient. More forums like the AGHS West Australian Branch tree forum are required in each district. We also need to capture the hearts and energies of a new generation so that politicians and managers will listen and support garden conservation.



The courtyard magnolia at Woodlands.

Photo: Jane Lennon

#### Further reading

Australia ICOMOS, *The Burra Charter 2013* (adopted 31 October 2013), and associated *Practice Notes* (2013)— <http://australia.icomos.org/publications/burra-charter-practice-notes/>  
 Peter Marquis-Kyle & Meredith Walker, *The Illustrated Burra Charter: good practice for heritage places*, Australia ICOMOS Inc., Burwood, Vic., 2004.

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Charles Birnbaum

# The Cultural Landscape Foundation: stewardship through education

Donnell Garden, Sonoma, California: a Modernist masterpiece by Thomas Church.

Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum, The Cultural Landscape Foundation®

Charles Birnbaum.

Photo by The Cultural Landscape Foundation®

The Cultural Landscape Foundation, a Washington-based organisation with the mission of stewardship through education, in promoting understanding and awareness of our shared landscape legacy.

Growing up in the 1960s and 1970s, environmental education was a national priority (under Richard Nixon, no less); because of it, I developed a language for understanding and communicating about environmental issues and taught my parents about the importance of recycling. Culturally, this was also the advent of the preservation movement, which taught people how to see, understand, and value architecture, and gave public agencies the policies and the funding for everything from surveys and registration to planning and design tools. Embedded within that environmental and cultural education was the notion of stewardship both as a responsibility and an opportunity. It stuck with me as a practitioner for eleven years in New York and as Director of the Historic Landscape Initiative for fifteen years at the National Park Service, a federal agency; and it's why I created The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF) sixteen years ago because I believed that that broad-based public education and sense of stewardship didn't extend to our shared *landscape* legacy.

From coast to coast, the United States has an unrivaled wealth of cultural landscapes, places that define the nation both in broad strokes and subtle nuances. However, without an understanding of the history and narratives of these places, ill- or uninformed stewardship could lead to and has resulted in poor management decisions, ranging from inappropriate designs to outright demolition. In a nation with a complex cultural landscape legacy and an ethos of reinvention, how do we manage continuity and change?

To better frame this discussion, let me first lay out the four types of cultural landscapes and then provide some information about TCLF. As to the former, there are *designed landscapes* created by landscape architects and allied professionals; *vernacular landscapes* that evolved through use by the people whose activities or occupancy shaped that site; *historic sites* associated with a historic event, activity or person(s); and *ethnographic landscapes* containing a variety of natural and cultural resources that the associated people define as heritage resources.

Now the latter; I grew TCLF as a volunteer for nine years while working at the National Park Service. TCLF is a non-membership organisation (because membership requires costly



infrastructure); it's online; and virtually all of the content is free, making it easily and widely accessible. The foundation is supported through its Board of Directors, Stewardship Council, individual donations, corporate sponsorships, conference and tour revenue, technical assistance fees, private and governmental grants, and other sources.

Organisationally and philosophically, we place great value on strategic partnerships with other organisations and with media—there are many groups that do things and have strengths we don't. Working together, we can be more effective and comprehensive. Finally, given the complexity of global media and the multiple ways people access information, we recognise the value of strategic communications to achieving our goals—consequently we have an experienced communications professional as a senior staff member. If we are to reach the many audiences we believe are interested in what we do and produce, then it's our job to speak to them in *their language*.

This brings me to our three major programs—*What's Out There*, *Pioneers of American Landscape Design*, and *Landslide*. At their core, the first two programs are databases—if we're to understand the breadth of our shared landscape legacy, then we must be able to define it. *What's Out There* is a free, online, profusely illustrated,

and carefully vetted database of the United States' cultural landscape legacy. *Pioneers* chronicles more than 350 years of practitioners and shapers of the American landscape. *Landslide* calls attention to threatened and at-risk landscapes and attempts to create a discussion that's not occurring about a site or broadening a debate that's in progress. They all point back to our mission—stewardship through education. In order to be stewards of our shared landscape legacy, we need to know what we have. For example, the general public has a baseline understanding of architecture, can distinguish styles such as Modern from Victorian, and has a value system for this aspect of our built environment. Landscapes, by contrast, are largely invisible.

*What's Out There*, an ongoing project, took ten years to develop and currently features more than 1,600 entries, 900 designer profiles, and 10,000 images. Each entry is an easily digestible 250 words, has six to eight photos, and links to related designer profiles and external Web sites, as appropriate. The audience is broad—landscape architects and allied professionals, students, heritage travelers, garden and landscape aficionados, and many others. One of the ways we build the database is by partnering with landscape architecture and historic preservation programs at universities around the country, getting students to do the research, onsite documentation, and photography of *What's Out There* entries—



Charles Birnbaum in the Hamptons with the Modernist landscape architect M. Paul Friedberg, who is the subject of one of TCLF's *Pioneers of American Landscape Design*® oral history projects (21 August 2014).

Photo by The Cultural Landscape Foundation®

they benefit by learning how to look at designed landscapes, and TCLF benefits by getting content and a new generation of followers. Speaking of new generations, we recently optimised our Web site for iPhones and similar handheld devices (which represents the greatest growth in traffic to our Web site), and even created a button called *What's Nearby*, a GPS-enabled function that when activated locates all landscapes in the database within a 25-mile radius. We also organise two to three *What's Out There Weekends* in different cities and regions each year. These provide free, expert-led tours in 25–30 publicly accessible designed landscapes, places people see daily but don't know the backstory.

*Pioneers* is a project I began while at the National Park Service to document practitioners from major to obscure. We've already produced two hefty tomes each with about 150 entries, a third is one the way, and we have even more online. In addition, we have produced eleven free video oral histories that examine the lives, careers, design philosophies, and significant built works of nine American practitioners, along with Shlomo Aronson of Israel and Cornelia Hahn Oberlander of Canada. Two more are in production. In a recent assessment of the program, Elizabeth Meyer, a landscape architect and Dean of the University of Virginia's Architecture department, said the oral histories are invaluable because they're primary source material.

Finally, *Landslide* is important for raising awareness when sites are in danger. There are two aspects to the program—entries we post to our Web site when we learn of a threatened site (and believe that our participation can affect its future) and our annual thematic compendium of sites, announced each fall. The latter is one of the most high profile events we stage—recent themes include *Marvels of Modernism*, *Landscape and Patronage*, and last year *The Landscape Architecture Legacy of Dan Kiley*. Several of these themed *Landslides* have been accompanied by traveling photographic exhibitions, with the one for Kiley—arguably one of the most important Modernist landscape architects of the 20th century—the most ambitious and the most popular. It was launched in November 2013 and is currently booked into 2017.

In addition to these programs, we organise tours, symposia, conferences, and lectures, provide technical assistance to public agencies and private organisations, write and publish extensively, and a great deal more.

So does this matter and does it work? I would argue 'yes' and 'yes'. How do we know? We can measure

success through many metrics. Internally, we can see the growth in traffic to our Web site (I look at Google analytics for our Web site every morning), attendance at conferences and tours, the number and breadth of partnerships we enter into, the conversations that we stimulate in the media about designed landscapes, and the threatened sites that are saved.

From the start, we have consistently said that cultural landscapes, including our designed landscape legacy, are worthy of the same level of consideration, care, and concern as our architectural legacy, despite the bias in favor of buildings (the great California-based Modernist landscape architect Thomas Church once wittily characterised the relationship of landscape architecture to architecture as 'parsley around the roast'). I can now point to the beginnings of a cultural attitudinal shift—the Indianapolis Museum of Art acquired the Miller House and Garden in Columbus, Indiana, a brilliant Modernist collaboration by Dan Kiley, architect Eero Saarinen and interior designer Alexander Girard, and have given equal curatorial weight to all aspects the design. The Preservation Society of Newport County, which oversees an extraordinary collection of Gilded Ages estates in Newport, Rhode Island, has recently elevated Jim Donahue, the horticulturist from one site, Green Animals, to be Curator of Historic Landscapes and Horticulture, with oversight for all of the Society's eleven properties. So, we have the landscape architecture at these sites being recognised at a curatorial level commensurate with the architecture.

Perhaps the most notable is a recent comment by the *New York Times* architecture critic Michael Kimmelman, who in a 31 July 2014 article argued against a proposed expansion of the Frick Collection in New York, in part, because it would come at the expense of a rare surviving American commission by the great and influential British landscape architect Russell Page. Given the paper's stature and its ability to influence and shape public debate, Kimmelman's remarks are a major milestone—he wrote: 'Great public places and works of landscape architecture deserve to be treated like great buildings'.

That is progress.

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**Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA, FAAR**, is the Founder and President of The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF). Prior to creating TCLF, Birnbaum spent fifteen years as the coordinator of the National Park Service Historic Landscape Initiative (HLI) and a decade in private practice in New York City with a focus on landscape preservation and urban design.





Tom Williamson

## *The contribution of landscape history to garden conservation*

Conservation of historic landscapes requires a thorough understanding of their fabric and systematic survey—using a range of approaches—can provide powerful evidence for decision makers.

There are many approaches to garden history, in England as elsewhere, and I am one of those whose background lies not in art history or horticulture but in *landscape history*. This subject was pioneered by the great W.G. Hoskins in the 1950s and 1960s, a combination of social and economic history and historical geography, focused on explaining how England's towns and countryside came to look the way they do, and what past structures and spatial relationships can tell us about human history. Landscape historians

are concerned with understanding and interpreting all aspects of the historic environment. I study gardens and parks; but I also research such things as the history and archaeology of woodland, the evolution of settlement patterns, and the origins and development of field systems. Moreover, as landscape history developed through the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, it incorporated aspects of disciplines outside geography and history, and especially the approaches and techniques of field archaeology and historical ecology.

Fieldwork remains at the core of the subject. My perspective on gardens thus begins with the sites themselves, and especially with their physical remains (often more informative than surviving plans or documents). Texts by contemporaries—individuals such as Walpole, Mason, Whately,

Tom Williamson pictured at Guimarães, Portugal, at the recent 2nd World Congress of Environmental History, where he delivered the findings of his latest research into fuel supply and its impact on English landscapes.  
Photo: Richard Aitken

or even Repton—describing the practice of landscape design come a poor second. There are many reasons for this, but the simplest is the most important texts like these unquestionably exaggerate the speed with which and extent to which successive new styles were adopted. Contemporaries wrote about what was new, fashionable, cutting edge, not about what was commonplace and normal; we too easily conflate the two.

Other key aspects of the ‘landscape history’ approach include an interest in regional variation in garden design, born in part from variations in physical geography and raw materials—the ‘genius of the place’—and in part from important variations in social organisation between, for example, areas in the hinterland of the metropolis and the remote provinces; and, in more general terms, an interest in understanding styles of garden design within wider social and economic contexts. People working from my perspective are interested in exploring the significance of different styles as something more than ‘fashion’, or expressions of artistic genius. We want to know how they were related to social attitudes, patterns of ownership, forms of economic organisation—and other forms of artistic expression, especially styles of domestic architecture.

One crucial aspect of this approach is that it encourages us to read the symbolism of designed landscapes in new ways. In particular, while we are all familiar with the way that gardens contained allusions based on knowledge of the classics or other aspects of high culture, we often neglect the more humdrum and ‘vernacular’ messages. Landscapes of pasture and woodland meant something long before Capability Brown used them, in novel ways, in his great designs. For example, garden historians are keen to emphasise the manner in which formal, enclosed gardens were swept away from country houses when the new English ‘landscape’ style became popular in the middle decades of the eighteenth century; and discuss this, perhaps, in terms of a new enthusiasm for ‘nature’. So far, so good. But we gain a further insight if we also note that when gardens were removed, so too were orchards, dovecotes, fish ponds, barns, and yards, a whole range of productive and often semi-ornamental facilities. The house set ‘free of walls’, standing in open parkland, conveyed an image of its owner rather different from the mansion hemmed in by useful clutter, much of it displaying the important fact that the owner was actively involved in the life of the estate and locality—and produced exotic foodstuffs for family consumption.

These kinds of approaches—rooted in the material, informed by debates in social and economic history, and placing gardens within a more extensive landscape context—are not ‘better’ than those adopted by other researchers and scholars, with backgrounds in horticulture, art history, or whatever. But they do provide an important additional perspective, that others might find useful.

*Moreover, a focus on the physical remains of past landscapes—on their materiality—arguably makes for a particularly good base on which to build their future*

Moreover, a focus on the physical remains of past landscapes—on their materiality—arguably makes for a particularly good base on which to build their future. Careful recording of what remains provides the only real basis for future conservation or restoration. Yet at the same time, the very act of teasing out the chronological layers of a place, and their associated meaning, can produce uncertainty about precisely what we should conserve or restore, and why. Is one phase of development more important than another? Did eighteenth- or nineteenth-century designers ever expect their planting to reach its current state of maturity; if not, why do we retain over-mature planting at all? Given that the surrounding landscape has usually changed beyond all recognition, and given that our inner worlds are so much different from those of contemporaries, can we ever really ‘restore’ a design at all, in any meaningful way? This said, contextualized, systematic study of landscapes provides one key advantage in evaluating the relative significance of particular sites. It ensures that we value, not only designs which display originality and artistic genius, but those which were ordinary and humdrum. Nothing is more deserving of preservation than a rare survivor of something once common.

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**Professor Tom Williamson** heads the Landscape Group within the School of History, University of East Anglia, where his work spans many disciplines, notably social and economic history, historical ecology, and archaeology.





Anna Foley

## *Advocating for heritage 'without a roof'*

The National Trust is actively involved in advocacy for the environment, including significant trees, parks and gardens, and landscapes, an aspect of its work often overlooked.

Advocating for environmental heritage is a broad mandate, but boils down to conservation issues relating to any heritage place 'without a roof'. It may come as no surprise to garden history lovers that, in addition to including heritage buildings, the National Trust has classified significant landscapes, gardens, and trees on its heritage register. Environmental places have been gradually added to the register since the 1960s, but the National Trust classification does not provide any legal protection, so we have an uphill battle from the start when heritage places are threatened.

Issues that affect environmental heritage range in scale, and the Trust can become involved at every conceivable point along the spectrum. In my

work, for example, a council arborist may contact the Trust before approving a permit request to prune a significant tree, or at the other end of the scale, the Trust comments on umbrella documents such as the National Heritage Strategy or other federal or state environmental policies or plans. In this, I am fortunate to be expertly advised by the National Trust's Significant Tree Committee, Landscape Committee, and regional branches, which combined have centuries of heritage knowledge.

Where environmental heritage differs from built heritage is that the environmental heritage values of a municipality are usually not as well documented as the architectural heritage fabric. So the National Trust takes a two-pronged approach to filling this knowledge gap where we can, firstly by encouraging the public to make nominations to our heritage register, particularly for significant trees. Secondly, we share our existing knowledge with local governments to get the ball rolling, and lobby councils to commission

Anna Foley enjoys seeing people's reaction to the new eye-catching National Trust van.  
Photo: Janet Keefe

studies that systematically identify and evaluate local environmental heritage, such as significant tree studies. We then actively support local government planners who use these studies to apply protections to locally significant places.

Heritage studies often focus on buildings first and foremost, with the gardens included where information is available. Such gardens associated with heritage buildings often appear to be protected, but permits are generally not required for garden works, which leaves the door wide open for the destruction of potentially significant plantings and features. A comprehensive description of the garden's significance is essential, to give council planners some power to argue for its protection.

For council planners, the elephant in the room is the cultural landscape. Australia's cultural landscapes (which incorporate both natural and social values) are not well identified, mapped, understood, or protected, and addressing this would require a significant investment by all tiers of government. In comparison, protecting significant trees could be seen as picking off the low-hanging fruit (if you'll excuse the horticultural pun). Hence, the emerging fashion amongst local government for managing significant trees and the broader 'urban forest'.

The reality dawning on many councils is that their tree canopy is facing the greatest threat seen in Australia since the impact of European settlement. Presenting a 'perfect storm' for loss of tree canopy is the maturation the first wave of extensive tree plantings from the Victorian era; increasing urbanisation of cities, with large numbers of trees lost from private land as property prices sky rocket and gardens are built over; and climate change. Many councils have recognised this grave triple threat, and are beginning to fund measures to halt and reverse the loss of tree cover within their municipality. Council engineers are starting to realise a mature tree can provide hundreds of dollars a year in amenity services (such as shade, cooling, and wind protection). To reverse the current trend of tree loss, the broader community must first recognise the value of trees in a way that elevates general benefits over any specific perceived risk of fallen branches or nuisance from leaves in gutters. In this way, significant trees might be seen by all as an asset, rather than a liability.

As part of an urban forest strategy, an increasing number of Councils are commissioning significant tree studies, which are generally supported by residents, and (once allocated a budget) are

relatively straightforward for arboricultural consultants to produce. By contrast, the National Trust has long relied on the public to draft nominations of their best-loved trees to potentially be added to its register. My predecessor at the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), Dr Sue Hughes, recognised the potential for using web-based tools to make it easier for the public to connect with the Trust. In August 2014, we launched the National Trusts of Australia 'Register of Significant Trees', which brings together all the state-based significant tree data from around the country onto one website at [www.trusttrees.org.au](http://www.trusttrees.org.au).

Users can find information on their local trees using the 'around me' function, or by searching for a particular location or species. The new site also has an electronic nomination form, which makes it easier to gather vital information such as GPS coordinates and digital photos. The site has been designed to adapt to any screen, so it works well on a smartphone, tablet, or computer. I have noticed a distinct increase in nominations since the new site was launched, and hope that as we continue to improve the site, nominations will keep piling in. I urge you to see if your favourite tree is registered, and if not, send us a nomination!

Echoing the words of Dr Greg Moore (Chair, Significant Tree Committee), although the registration poses no legal controls over the tree, it does create a moral obligation for that owner to care and maintain their significant tree, and the majority of people who own a significant tree on their property are proud of its status on the register. The National Trust has been very successful in advocating for the conservation of trees on the register, and we have had barely a handful of trees demolished from the register in the last decade.

As the National Trust has always suffered from a lack of resources, we are unfortunately forced to triage the problems that come to our attention. In this regard, we rely on our heritage register, and the level of significance attributed by it (either local, regional, state, or national) to guide our precious time and money towards the most significant places under threat. To achieve a holistic outcome across the country, we rely on you, as a passionate local resident with one ear to the ground, to stand up for heritage in your neighbourhood, and to give us a call if you need some backup to fight the good fight.

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Linden Groves

## *The power of people to protect our historic landscapes*

These days, volunteers are playing an increasing role in the work of garden and landscape conservation, and in the United Kingdom, the Garden History Society and the Association of Gardens Trusts have led the way.

If you thought that landscape historians in England spent their time in quiet archives poring over dusty documents, or in tranquil gardens with ne'er a soul to be seen, think again. These days, those involved in the key landscape history organisations—I'm thinking in particular of the Garden History Society and the Association of Gardens Trusts with its band of County Gardens Trusts—are busy, very busy, and it's all about the power of people these days.

As the economic recession hit the United Kingdom, politicians started to talk about the Big Society which, very broadly speaking, meant looking to grassroots volunteers to provide many

services that we had been used getting from paid professionals, and along the way creating a wonderful joined-up community in which enthusiastic people from all corners of life might come together for a common goal.

As a professional landscape historian with a particular interest in conservation, I have found my own life to somewhat embody the principles of the Big Society. For many years I was Conservation Officer for the Garden History Society, carrying out the GHS's role as a statutory consultee in the planning system, chiefly by commenting on planning applications and other development proposals. We were paid to do this using our professional expertise, but drew heavily on the local specialist knowledge of volunteers in the County Gardens Trusts.

In the UK, everyone is familiar with County Gardens Trusts but perhaps they need some explaining for an Australian audience? These are county-based groups, some having run for a

Linden Groves and fellow Historic Landscape Project Officer Verena McCaig at a recent Association of Gardens Trusts study day at Lowther Castle, Cumbria, England.

Photo: Steffie Shields

couple of decades, some for only a few years, all independent but voluntarily linked by an umbrella group, the Association of Gardens Trusts. Membership of each Trust tends to range from 80 members to several hundred, and although there is inevitably a bulk who join simply because they enjoy visiting nice gardens with likeminded people, there is a growing number of hard workers who are keen to play a more active role, perhaps with interests in research, conservation, or education. Increasingly, these may be retired people with a relevant professional background that they are keen to use.

Some five years ago the Garden History Society and the Association of Gardens Trusts began to develop their collaborations in a Working Together partnership, and are now moving towards the possibility of merging into one new organisation in 2015. This very much fits with the Big Society zeitgeist, itself reflected in the National Heritage Protection Plan that English Heritage is encouraging heritage organisations to sign up to, as a way of focussing everyone's efforts on working together to maximise the results of increasingly limited resources, with an emphasis on pulling in the wider community.

As part of this process, I (along with colleagues) was made redundant from my post as Conservation Officer, as the GHS focussed its efforts instead on supporting and training volunteers in the County Gardens Trusts to be able to carry out much of the necessary conservation work. This they are marvellously placed to do, because whilst the GHS's scholarly background enables it to take a useful national overview, the local specialist knowledge of the County Gardens Trusts (and the sheer mass of their numbers) gives them an invaluable ability to appropriately deal with the mountain of planning applications. The GHS, meanwhile, would be freed-up to lead wider campaigns, comment on issues of national significance, and of course support the Trusts.

Some time later, I was fortunate to be appointed as a Historic Landscape Project Officer, working with my fellow HLPO Verena McCaig to support County Gardens Trusts in their work conserving historic designed landscapes. Appropriately for this new utopia—in which everyone works together—this is a shared project between the Association of Gardens Trusts and the Garden History Society, with funding from English Heritage. Thus I find myself mirroring the development of the Big Society, having moved in a matter of a few years from directly carrying

out conservation work in a professional capacity, to now helping volunteers to carry out that same work in my place.

So what tools does this unified but diverse workforce have in achieving the 'conservation of historic landscapes'? Well, there are several big themes underpinning much of our collective conservation work these days.

Obviously, someone needs to be keeping a watchful eye on planning applications to ward off any unsuitable development, and County Gardens Trusts are now doing a sterling job of this. But in doing so, we are simply keeping our heads above water, and so increasingly we are all trying to have a serious input into Local Plans, the framework that local authorities use to guide development in their areas.

*Another way of achieving more solid foundations for the protection of landscapes is through the effective use of Conservation Management Plans for historic landscapes*

Another way of achieving more solid foundations for the protection of landscapes is through the effective use of Conservation Management Plans for historic landscapes, something for which I believe Australia was an early proponent. We all know now to recommend the use of a CMP at every possible opportunity, in order to ensure that owners, managers, and developers understand the asset they hold, and can plan to avoid ill-informed piecemeal developments. (And I am currently working on an additional GHS project, to compile a list of Conservation Management Plans, so that they can be harnessed as a research tool, as well as a conservation aid.)

Perhaps most fundamentally, it is increasingly accepted that *understanding* is at the heart of conservation success, with an insistence in the National Planning Policy Framework (the government policy which guides local planners' decision-making) that development is based on an understanding of the significance of the heritage asset that it affects. Indeed, there is constant reference these days to how it is the *significance* of a site that we must understand and protect, not simply the tangible asset. Interestingly, assessing the significance of a site is an art not a science; it is often deemed to reflect the social value of a

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Eduarda Paz

## Garden history and heritage conservation in Portugal

Portugal boasts a fine collection of historic gardens and landscapes, but garden history and conservation resources struggle to meet the undoubted significance of this outstanding cultural resource.

I came to garden conservation through biology and in my MSc at the University of Coimbra, took a special interest in the exotic plant collections of nineteenth-century Portuguese gardens. A study tour of British gardens in my graduation year (1994) encouraged me to take an MA in Conservation of Historic Gardens and Landscapes at the University of York, commenced three years later. Almost all my theoretical background was gained at York, from the likes of Peter Goodchild, Hazel Conway, and my MA supervisor David Jacques. My studies addressed the 'urgency of starting the study of Portuguese gardens', pointed out as early as 1943 by the first Portuguese landscape architect, F. Caldeira Cabral. Encouraged by Ian Kennaway, a former English National Trust Director (and now in recent years actively involved

in heritage conservation in the Czech Republic), I started my career in garden tourism.

Portuguese gardens started to be shaped by the Romans, who brought new plants (olive and fig trees, and vines), and their topiary and pergolas. The Moorish cultural influence reinforced Roman taste for aromatic plants, intimate courtyards with water features and decorative stone pavements, and introduced new elements such as citrus trees, and most notably, the use of *azulejos* (glazed tiles). Maritime discoveries and contact with the East strongly influenced the arts and contributed to the introduction of new exotic plants mainly from India, China, Japan, and Brazil.

These elements are central to the distinctive character of Portuguese gardens, which unites sites as varied as the royal grounds of Queluz or Belém, Cercas (monastery estates) like Tibães or Buçaco, and wealthy family summer retreats (*Quintas de Recreio*). Among the finest examples of *Quinta* (estate used both as pleasure palace and farmhouse) are Bacalhoa, possibly the most beautiful from the first half of the 15th century, and Alão (Recarei),

Eduarda Paz at Buçaco in central Portugal, an outstanding forest park (on UNESCO's World Heritage 'tentative list' awaiting full inscription) demonstrating a wonderful interplay of cultural and natural values, including its own massive Bunya pine and other Australian trees.

a stunning gem from the 17th century. *Quinta* gardens of the 18th century such as Biscainhos (Braga) and Vila Flor (Guimarães) typically feature azulejo-decorated cool-houses, statuary, and box-lined parterres laid out symmetrically around water features, forming terraces aligned with the main axis of the house. The 19th century marked a departure from this Baroque layout in favour of Romantic-style designs (for example, Pena, Monserrate, and Regaleira in Sintra, Mata José do Canto and Parque Terra Nostra in Azores, and Quinta of Villar d'Allen in Porto) with great collections of exotic plants. Examples of 20th century garden design can also be found in the Gulbenkian and Serralves parks, both recently listed as monuments of national interest.

In Portugal, garden history is hardly recognised as a distinct academic discipline and contributions have tended to come from authors outside the fields of botany or horticulture. The most notable early twentieth century references are the articles 'A Jardinagem em Portugal' (Gardening in Portugal) by art historian and archaeologist Sousa Viterbo in 1906–09, and the 1962 volume *Arte Paisagista e Arte dos Jardins em Portugal* (Landscape and Garden Art in Portugal) by the landscape architect Ilídio de Araújo, a disciple of Caldeira Cabral.

As president of the Portuguese Association of Landscape Architects, Cabral led the first programme for the restoration of historic gardens, launched in 1988 by the Directorate-General for Cultural Heritage (DGPC, then IPPAR) following the ICOMOS Florence Charter. This programme marked a growing interest in garden history, reflected by the number of studies and publications in the last two decades, predominantly academic research. There is also a significant contribution from governmental conservation bodies and, to a lesser extent, foundations in charge of important historic gardens. Independent research is still incipient.

According to the works of Viterbo, Araújo, and, more recently, inventories by Aurora Carapinha and Cristina Castel-Branco, the majority of the culturally significant gardens are private; some of them belong to foundations or charities. Very few are owned by the church, due to the extinction of religious orders by decree in 1834 and confiscation of their properties—many of these properties were then sold, but some of the most outstanding, including convent and monastery grounds, cloister gardens, and summer retreats, remained under or were later returned to state ownership. Many other highly important gardens also belong to public entities. Most urban green spaces,

including some significant formerly private sites adapted for public use, are owned and managed by local authorities. Gardens of former royal palaces and residences and archaeological sites are invariably under national conservation authorities or public foundations. Botanic gardens belong to the state universities.

The DGPC is the government body responsible for listing. Three levels of protection are defined: national, public, and municipal interest. Any proposed alterations to a listed site require permission from the conservation authorities at the appropriate level. Of more than 3900 sites recorded in DGPC's Register for Immovable Heritage, only a handful are listed as gardens or parks in their own right. Over a hundred others, however, listed under different typologies (mostly 'quinta', 'palace', or 'manor house') include culturally significant gardens.

By the end of the 1990s, a DGPC working group on historic gardens developed a methodology for assessing designed landscape heritage based on criteria developed for the comparable UK register and in accordance with international conventions signed by Portugal. This methodology was tested on a small sample of sites but never fully applied. Nevertheless, the importance of gardens and their relationship with buildings is being increasingly acknowledged in the assessment of heritage site significance. From my own work, I strongly believe that attracting visitors through good promotion and interpretation practices is key to sustaining a virtuous cycle of garden heritage research and conservation.

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**Eduarda Paz** is a specialist in garden conservation recently elected International Camellia Society director for Portugal. She created Caminhos do Ocidente, a company specialising in environmental and horticultural tours and interpretation.





Amy Hobbs

## Connection to place

Conserving New Zealand's significant gardens and cultural landscapes is a vital part of the work of Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, the country's principal government heritage agency.

My role at Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga is very diverse and every day is different. I manage 17 heritage properties between Waikato and Wellington in the North Island of New Zealand. A lot of what I do on a day to day basis is enabling the opportunity for people to connect with their histories and encouraging a sense of belonging and understanding of place to all visitors. The properties I manage range from a church, lighthouse, suspension bridge, Pā (fortified village) and redoubt sites, historic houses and cottages and their gardens and grounds, a Blockhouse, a courthouse, and a School of Mines. Revenue generation through events, merchandise,

donations, and third-party funding is very important at our properties because without it we would have insufficient funds to keep up with the ongoing maintenance. Heritage New Zealand is 80% funded by Central Government and the rest we have to generate ourselves.

I believe that my landscape architectural skills are strongly utilised in my current role and they definitely helped me to secure my job when I joined Heritage New Zealand (then known as the New Zealand Historic Places Trust) in 2010. The key skills that I often deploy are those around fully understanding the many layers of a place including the people associated with the site. Landscape architects are trained to understand and re-imagine the complex layers of our landscapes and societal needs through the process of assessment and design.

I work closely with Māori tribes (Iwi), sub tribes (Hapū), and families (whānau) to care

Amy Hobbs and a sleepy New Zealand Fur Seal at Kaikoura, an outstanding cultural landscape in the South Island of New Zealand. Photo: Rob Harris



for our significant cultural, spiritual, heritage places. In September this year, for instance, I headed to Taupo to continue discussions and planning for the ongoing grounds maintenance and interpretation of Opotaka Pā and Te Pōrere Redoubt with two New Zealand Māori tribes, Tūwharetoa and Ngāti Hikairo. As part of this, I have also spoken at a number of conference and symposiums around New Zealand on the interpretation of cultural and heritage landscape as well as heritage garden planning.

My colleague Te Kenehi Teira, Heritage New Zealand's Māori Heritage Manager, and I delivered a joint presentation recently at the 'Commemorating: Histories and Anniversaries Conference' at Te Manawa, Palmerston North in the North Island. Our presentation, Ngā Pae o Maumahara, outlined an initiative led by community and Iwi with the aim of raising awareness of the events that took place leading up to and during the New Zealand Wars. The Chair of Ngā Pae o Maumahara says 'We want to promote the themes of reconciliation and transformation which we believe will resonate with all New Zealand'. This concept of commemoration is centred on the New Zealand calendar of events and how communities are commemorating their events to drive other outcomes within their community. Māori communities often run to various kaupapa (plans or agendas) and calendars. The New Zealand Wars commemorations run to a combination of kaupapa which are captured by the concept of Ngā Pae o Maumahara.

The work of Heritage New Zealand is also underpinned by the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi, New Zealand's founding document. In particular, Section 7 of the *Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014* is based on the provisions of the Treaty of Waitangi, (summarised opposite).

An example of Heritage New Zealand's work under the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi can be seen at one of the places I manage in the Waikato located one hour south of Auckland. This place is called Rangiriri Pā and is the site of one of the major battles during the Waikato War of 1863 and 1864 (part of the New Zealand Wars). The work Heritage New Zealand has completed for this particular site was described in my article 'Interpreting the Waikato War: digital and physical interpretation of a contested cultural landscape' [*Australian Garden History*, 25 (4), 2014].

Without groups like Heritage New Zealand and concepts like Ngā Pae o Maumahara and a passionate number of people and groups, we could

## Article 1 - Kawanatanga

- Government support to layers of history;
- Promotion of Māori heritage education;
- Commemoration and protection of places and memorials.

## Article 2 – Tino Rangatiratanga

- Iwi and Hapū mana whenua [people of the land] over taonga [a treasured thing] in their rohe [area]: eg:
  - Places and sites of significance;
  - Stories;
  - Graves and kōiwi [historical human remains];
  - Weapons and other objects.

## Article 3 – Nga Oritetanga

- Rights and privileges of all Māori people:
  - Protection of te Reo Māori (e.g. Māori place names) and stories in Te Reo Māori);
  - Protection of intellectual and cultural property rights of all Māori people.

## Article 4 – Nga Ritenga Maori

- Beliefs and practices of all Māori people:
  - Kaitiakitanga [guardianship] over taonga, kōiwi, places, sites of significance and stories of all Hapū and Iwi;
  - Kaitiakitanga practiced by Tangata Whenua, Hapu and Iwi in their rohe in a living cultural context.

not care for and continue to tell the stories of our amazingly significant places. We could not do the work without the skills of our staff, consultants, contractors, partners and of course hard working volunteers.

The core work that Heritage New Zealand staff, supporters, contractors, and volunteers undertake is key to the next generations of New Zealanders to have an understanding—especially in relation to recognising what happened during the New Zealand Wars—of what makes New Zealand distinctive and how our society and culture developed to what it is today.

**Amy Hobbs** is Heritage Destinations Manager Central, at Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, managing heritage properties from Waikato to Wellington in the North Island.





Stuart Read & Gwenda Sheridan

## *Challenges in conserving living heritage*

Trees form the backbone of Australia's significant gardens and designed landscapes, yet current approaches to their management leave this vital living heritage in peril.

Australia has significant living heritage in its country gardens, house surrounds, streetscapes, parks, trees, towns, villages or rural landscapes not listed in normal registers of planning schedules. Such living heritage offers huge health, amenity, and tourism opportunities that are being overlooked. Conserving it presents many challenges including lack of recognition or statutory listing, current maintenance, and ongoing management to renew significant elements such as old or aging trees and shrubs.

Most governments have retreated from heritage listing and management, taking instead a narrow understanding of what is significant. Since approximately 2000, heritage systems have undergone major change at all levels. There is little leadership, dwindling resources (funds, staff), less rigour in guidance to owners (or none at all). Killing the Register of the National Estate in 2007 was a body blow for the nation's heritage, but especially in Tasmania, with its enormous heritage but few funds or good policy to conserve it. National budget cuts and downsizing, and a lack of appropriately skilled staff (such as horticulturists with appropriate landscape knowledge) remain a weakness in our system.

Local government has a major role to play in heritage assessment and management but in general lacks resources and an adequate understanding of garden history. Heritage register lists often lack the rigour (for example adequate curtilage definition, good descriptions of layout, landscape or garden components, plant palette, condition, costed maintenance plans) needed to protect and manage historic gardens and plants. There is an urgent need to correctly identify, propagate, replenish, and maintain plants and trees with good horticultural practices while researching, documenting, and understanding historic layout, design, embellishment, and management needs.

Planning often fails to consider living heritage. New South Wales has dramatically changed its planning system and continues 'cutting red tape'. Tasmania received a profound shake-up with new 2009 legislation—29 new interim planning schemes using a common template (zones, codes, use definitions). Going further, the Tasmanian and NSW governments both now require a single state-wide planning template.

Planning has been 'reformed' in many states, emphasising a dumbed-down, tick-box, standardised template. Australian lawyer and urban planner John Mant noted recently that zoning led to a 'could be anywhere' urban landscape while planning academic Tony Hall pointed to the loss of urban gardens, an Australian pattern not reflected overseas. Densification

Stuart Read and Gwenda Sheridan in the field, each pursuing their passions for identification, analysis, and advocacy.

Photo: Jennifer Sheridan

and infill sees old gardens replaced with multi-unit housing, overshadowed by bulky houses on ever-smaller blocks, front yard car parks, rear extensions. This is death by 1000 cuts.

Development assessment also now concentrates on one land parcel, ignoring surrounding area context. In older suburbs many new developments fail to fit in. Adequate garden curtilages or setbacks, composite pattern character (for example, similar-era gardens along a street), authentic, distinctive local-place streetscapes are being razed for monoculture and paving. An historic garden collection of varied exotic, sometimes rare trees, shrubs, and other plants in an older street or suburb incrementally disappear. New South Wales's premier garden suburb Haberfield lacks state heritage listing and could easily fall victim to 'code assessment'. Victoria offers planning overlays that have potential to pick up local character, living heritage. Will these be used elsewhere in future? Will locals even get a say?

As greenfield lots get ever smaller, McMansions larger, gardens shrink, plants—where grown—are vestigial: a mockery. Street trees are often absent. We are amplifying what Robin Boyd in the 1960s called 'the Australian ugliness'. We no longer appear to value historic green space and its contribution to our places, our lives. Research shows green space is essential to good health, but we still often fail to see the benefits of living heritage: fresh air, water, space for exercise, retreat, study, and inspiration. Smarter densification on green- or brown-field sites could see architect and author Christopher Alexander's methods become more mainstream. In this, the garden percentage space roughly balances that of buildings (each approximately 28%). Not all houses/concrete/paving!

Training is the key. There is little debate; mandated and enacted higher standards of practice are missing. Garden and landscape history must become a better-recognised and standard course at various levels in tertiary institutions. Design, planning, recreation, and health professionals including landscape architects, architects, and planners need broader training including heritage landscapes, garden design, plant palettes, fashions, as they now do for architectural styles.

Horticulture is not seen as a core skill for sustainable future needs (as in the UK), such that TAFE and university courses would include a compulsory historical focus on plants, design, and landscape as interdisciplinary units. The Planning Institute of Australia has no such course in its Certified Practising Planner units. TAFE horticulture courses need heritage components to comprehensively train future gardeners and managers of historic parks and gardens. Funding to digitise records, conservation plans, and research to be at the fingertips of decision makers, would help.

Seeing heritage as buildings only, with no surrounds, outlook, views, or vistas (in or out) is destructive. We can't protect what we haven't listed, described, prepared, and or enacted conservation policies for. Historic trees age and die—propagating offspring and staged replanting are vital to ensure they continue contributing.

Government withdrawal from heritage ownership and management, selling-off our 'assets', the push for living green spaces as mere backdrop to 'events', the drive to 'make a buck' from parks and open places is in stark contrast to what an interested community appear to want. Witness recent growth in school, community, and balcony

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gardens, 'growing-your-own' locally, learning about sustainability, and lower water and energy use. And in Friends Groups to protect parks and open spaces threatened by development, raising funds, and voluntarily maintaining historic gardens and parks. We're into this!

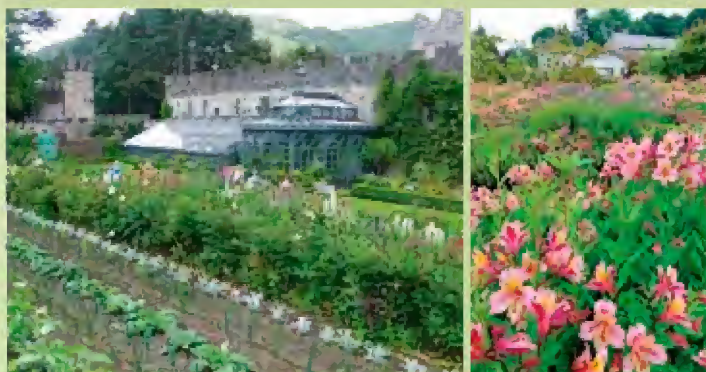
In 2011 the National Trust Tasmania put the island's rural landscape on the endangered list. With such authentic examples abounding, conserving cultural landscapes still seems a distant dream despite green shoots in 12 southern councils to list heritage precincts or landscapes. No state policy in the north of the state addresses Tasmanian landscapes and none are listed. Few are listed on the mainland.

Hovering over all is climate change and more frequent El Niño and La Niña events, gales, droughts, floods, bushfires, heatwaves, uncertainty. Cycles of disease (myrtle rust, cypress canker, and araucaria wilt for example) and changed watering cycles lead to dying plants. Risk and management are enormous issues, particularly in public spaces.

In the past Australia planted trees. Beautification was the catchword. Tasmania was touted as a 'Garden State of Australia' (long before Victoria!). Trees could grow into mature, grand examples. In future, will the grandeur of an ancient tree only be seen in World Heritage Areas or botanic gardens? Garden history needs a makeover from a 'nanna' or 'fuddy duddy' image (to use Dominic Cole's candid assessment). We need to promote the positives that mature landscapes, parks, gardens, and trees give to daily life, mood, wildlife, public health, and social cohesion. We all benefit and have roles to play—custodianship, maintenance, renewal, advocacy, and in sheer enjoyment of these diverse places.

**Stuart Read** is a horticulturist and landscape architect in New South Wales working on local, regional, national and international heritage areas, seeking better management.

**Gwenda Sheridan** trained as a geographer and historian and has spent 18 years as a research consultant in Tasmania working in her interdisciplinary areas including heritage planning, gardens, trees and, horticulture.



## Northern Ireland & Donegal Garden Tour

15–24 June 2015

The renowned gardens of Ulster thrive in a temperate and well-watered climate, and are the legacy of generations of enthusiastic plant hunters and collectors over the past four centuries.

This 10-day tour takes in some of the most important private gardens of Northern Ireland and Donegal. Many houses have been in the same family since they were built, in some cases for 400 years. The houses and gardens have evolved over the generations, and we will have the privilege of meeting many of the current owners who have made their own mark on their much-loved properties. Baronscourt, Ballyscullion Park, Benvariden and Glenarm Castle are some of those we visit. By contrast, we also visit some exciting modern gardens.

**Cost is \$5,200 per person plus SS**

DOES NOT INCLUDE TRAVEL TO OR FROM IRELAND

### Enquiries and Bookings

**Ann Wegener** (Qld branch AGHS), who will accompany the tour: **Email** [annwegener@me.com](mailto:annwegener@me.com) **Phone** 0407 378 585 **OR** 07 3204 6580

On both tours accommodation will be in Country House Hotels and all meals are included in the tour. On most days we will be hosted at a private house either for lunch, dinner, drinks or afternoon tea. Bring your walking shoes and enjoy a reasonable amount of walking. Maximum number of participants is 14. Tours run with a minimum of 10. Experienced local guides will accompany each tour.

## Gardens of Scotland

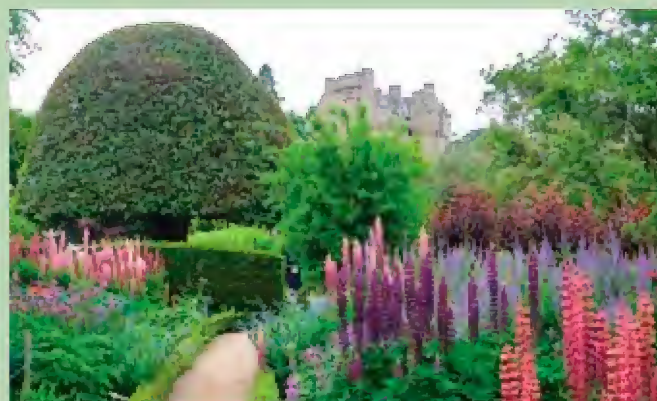
1–10 July 2015

Many Scottish immigrants arrived in Australia from their homeland with skills and knowledge about gardening and horticulture. This 10 day tour visits areas of Scotland from where many of our forebears came and will visit Historic Estates and modern gardens. Many of the properties are privately owned and provide an inner glimpse into life from the past and present. This is an opportunity to see some wonderful Scottish architecture, grand estates and spectacular gardens.

The tour commences in Edinburgh, proceeds to the Scottish Highlands in Perthshire, then travels through the natural landscape and high country of Glenshee to Balmoral Estate and Crathes Castle and returns to Edinburgh.

**Cost is \$5,800 per person plus SS**

DOES NOT INCLUDE TRAVEL TO OR FROM SCOTLAND





# Netscape

National Association for Olmsted Parks

[www.olmsted.org](http://www.olmsted.org)

In a previous issue of *Australian Garden History* (25 (4), pages 35–36), writing about the present-day threats to Lake Burley Griffin in Canberra, Juliet Ramsay drew readers' attention to the National Association for Olmsted Parks (NAOP), highlighting the organisation for its intense work across all stages in the advocacy, research, education, and conservation of the important legacy of the landscape work by Frederick Law Olmsted Senior and the firm continued by his sons.

Frederick Law Olmsted (1822–1903), his sons, and successor firm created designs for thousands of landscapes throughout North America. Central Park in New York City, Boston's Emerald Necklace, the grounds of the United States Capitol and the White House, and the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago are among some of the most well known. Olmsted was also a founding member of the American Society of Landscape Architects and was influential in the formation of the US National Parks Service.

The NAOP was established in 1980, and they describe themselves as 'a coalition of design and preservation professionals, historic property and park managers, scholars, municipal officials, citizen activists, and representatives of numerous Olmsted organizations around the United States.' Partner organisations include the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site (National Parks Service), Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, friends groups of Olmsted sites, The Cultural

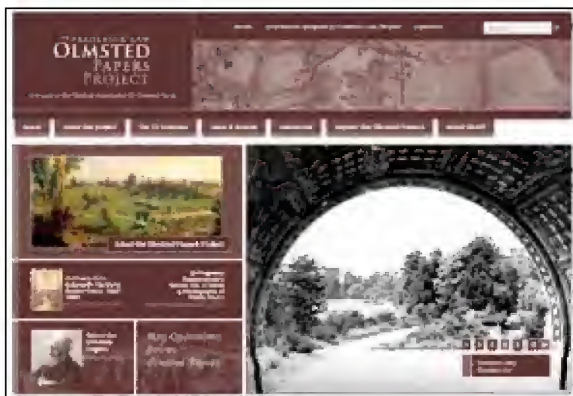
Landscape Foundation, the Library of American Landscape History, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, some of which are interconnected.

Amongst its advocacy work and advocacy resources, the NAOP sponsors the Frederick Law Olmsted Papers Project, undertaken to identify the most significant writings of Olmsted and to present them in context in a readable, published twelve-volume format. Established in 1972—the year of the Olmsted Sesquicentennial celebrations—nine volumes (and 3 supplementary volumes) have since been published or are underway. Series editor Charles E. Beveridge has provided scholarly rigour to the research and public outreach, and the volumes published so far in this ongoing project have been crucial primary source material for advocates, conservers, and stewards of Olmsted parks across North America. Additionally, these publications have provided the intellectual capital for the advocacy and restoration efforts of the NAOP.

Underpinning the philosophy of the NAOP is the recognition that significant historic parks, gardens, and landscapes need strong national support. And the NAOP's coalition model which endeavours to provide such support seems to offer the most fertile ground for onlookers concerned about how to effectively advocate the protection and conservation of significant cultural landscapes and historic gardens in our own country, which are similarly beset by development pressures, diminishing state and local government budgets, and a lack of research and general understanding of their value to present and future generations.

At a time when Australia ICOMOS is seeking answers to the question of whether the current climate of political indifference towards heritage conservation signals a 'Return to a New Age of Activism for Cultural Heritage?'—at a forthcoming mini-conference in Victoria (17 October 2014)—the collective model, multi-pronged approach to advocacy, and value that the NAOP and its partner organisations place on ensuring accessible, scholarly research, and education about significant gardens and landscapes warrant consideration in conversations about how to galvanise local conservation efforts.

Christina Dyson





# Museum musings

## A museum library: another garden 'tool'

Ray Choate

The impressive collection of garden tools donated by Richard Bird ('The Old Mole') to found the Australian Museum of Gardening at Carrick Hill includes a small collection of books relating to gardening. This inevitably leads one—especially a gardener of bookish inclination (or a librarian)—to reflect upon the relationship of books to gardens.

How many gardeners have spent cold and wet winter days and nights indoors thinking about and planning their gardens and gardening chores? Seed and nursery catalogues frequently perused and 'wish lists' drawn up. Books gleaned for ideas and plans (both real and imaginary) regarding landscaping, appropriate plantings, practical skills, and other aspects of garden making. In this context, books themselves are 'tools' with several garden purposes.

A recent generous offer of an important and extensive collection of books on gardens and gardening was an incentive for the Museum to contemplate the role of books as part of its collection, and to commence the development of a policy for the acquisition, retention, and use of such a collection.

There will be books that relate directly to description and history of gardening tools; whether they speak of a special tool or of tools in general, it is important that the museum have them in order to more accurately and carefully interpret the tools in its collection, their history, and their use. At the same time, books on the history of gardens often contain photographs and other illustrations that demonstrate tools in use, with relevant and useful commentary on them that in turn provides important context to tools as useful and practical implements for production of flowers, vegetables, and fruit.

A good example would be the variety of tools that have been developed, say, for propagation or pruning—many booklets demonstrate by photographs or other illustrations the most practical use of these specific purpose tools. Also there are special tools, from different times, for purposes of planting seeds, bulbs, and other plants, not to mention pest eradication—some older books often show the most grotesque apparatuses for the elimination of rodents and insects.

Richly illustrated books on gardens are a source of ideas and inspiration regarding landscaping, garden ornamentation, garden structures, and

recreational use of garden spaces. Thus the 'book as tool' leads to planning and design work, which then calls upon the 'tool as object' for implementation of these ideas. And, of course, there are practical books relating to the actual development and construction of these landscape features.

In addition to practical uses in association with the tools in the collection, such books will be useful for exhibition and display purposes, providing documentation for exhibits, and in some cases being an exhibition object themselves. In the fullness of time, it is possible that the Museum will be a publisher of books relating to its collections and their history.

Importantly, such a collection is a resource tool in its own right for researchers and scholars on gardens, gardening, and garden implements. Plans for such a library collection are in their infancy, however it should be a broad-based collection of books, pamphlets, seed catalogues, and garden-related ephemera (such as seed packets and other ephemera). While it is intended that the collection should emphasise and have substantial Australian content, it is important that it be international in scope, bearing in mind that the history of gardening in Australia has been, and is being, influenced by overseas trends and practices.

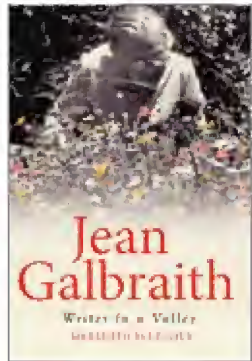
There are already fine collections in South Australia (for example the State Library of South Australia, Botanic Gardens of Adelaide, and the Universities of Adelaide and South Australia) and in other Australian institutions. With this in mind, the collection would need to be carefully selected, catalogued and made available on the web so that students, scholars, and other researchers would be able to know what was in place at the Museum, and how best to make use of the material either on site, or via the web. An important consideration is that the users would be able to consult a wide variety of gardening materials in one place, noting that this is often difficult in public and academic libraries where such materials can be dispersed throughout the classification schema or in off-site storage.



Engraving of Saul's tulip transplanter from the 1834 edition of Loudon's well-known *Encyclopaedia of Gardening*.

'Saul's tulip transplanter (fig. 312.) has a spring handle (a), which closes the apparatus, and which, after the plant is placed in the hole for it, admits of readily discharging the ball of earth without injuring the roots.'

# For the bookshelf



Meredith Fletcher, *Jean Galbraith: writer in a valley*, Monash University Publishing, Clayton, Vic., 2014 (ISBN 9781922235398 / 9781922235404), paperback and ebook, 307pp, RRP \$39.95

Most AGHS members knew of the writer, botanist, and gardener, Jean Galbraith, both through her writings and her correspondence with Lady Law Smith (as brought to life in Anne Latreille's excellent book *Kindred Spirits*). Some would have met Jean and I know I am only one of many who made the pilgrimage to her 'garden in a valley' Dunedin, at Tyers in Gippsland, to step into her world and further understand this singular, gentle naturalist who breathed life into everything she wrote. With what a sense of anticipation and wonder I recall entering through the old picket gate, which Jean's close friend and garden historian, Peter Cuffley described as 'the gateway to a kind of paradise'.



It was not till reading Meredith Fletcher's *Jean Galbraith: writer in a valley*, however, that I felt closer to knowing Jean Galbraith the person. Meredith has sensitively, compassionately, and factually fleshed out the life of the person she believes 'became Australia's most influential writer on nature, plants and gardening'. Certainly, like her contemporary and friend, Edna Walling, Jean turned botanical writing into a literary art with her poet's sensibility and enquiring mind.

Meredith tells the compelling story of a modest woman who lived simply and with great joy; of a shy young woman who became a gardener, a botanist, a promoter and defender of Australian flora, and a noted writer. I was humbled and inspired taking in the life of this pure person with such a zest for learning and interest in the natural environment, but mostly by Meredith's summation that 'above all, her archive reveals the life of a good person'. As the late Dame Elisabeth Murdoch wrote to Jean (following a visit to 'Dunedin'): 'The beautiful simplicity and charm of your writing is matched by your character and personality'.

Writing for the *Garden Lover* for an impressive 69 years, it was only failing eyesight that forced her, reluctantly, to put down her pen. Jean also wrote extensively for children, including scripts for school broadcasts about the wonder of nature. Her writings inspired younger readers to try gardening and older readers to love plants and the natural bushland as she did. Her books remain treasured items for garden lovers and bibliophiles

for their integrity and her ability to evoke the spirit of places she knew and love for the natural environment. Her reading public were loyal and devoted.

For almost 80 years, Jean had lived in her home and garden, Dunedin. It was not until she was in her 60s that the telephone was connected, hence, letter writing throughout her life remained her way of keeping in touch with people. This prodigious correspondence, along with her school exercise books and childhood field notes, her books and notebooks, provided Meredith Fletcher with the background to shape into her biography. Meredith was the recipient of a State Library of Victoria Creative Fellowship to research Jean Galbraith's life and for a year immersed herself in the inner sanctum of the Library's reading room where she had access to Jean's archives.

I didn't have the pleasure of meeting Jean, but through Meredith's absorbing book, feel I have more than glimpsed the spirit of this generous hearted, compassionate, modest, selfless, and caring individual that has helped shape our national landscape identity.

**Trisha Burkitt**

Gini Lee and SueAnne Ware (eds), *Taylor Cullity Lethlean: making sense of landscape*, Spacemaker Press, LLC, Washington, DC, 2013 (ISBN 9780982439272): hardcover, 192pp, RRP AU\$54.99

'In Australia we are progressively waking up to our not knowing that we don't know. We are realising that we do not know this place.' *Making Sense of Landscape* begins with this quote from Kevin Taylor, and ends with an essay by Professor Paul Carter dedicated 'For Kevin'. Carter contrasts architecture with the psychic life of landscape architecture, 'imitative of the elemental dynamism found in living, self-organising systems ... it has to put the oikos back into ecology, that is, the communing in community'. The spaces between comprise a selection of Taylor Cullity Lethlean's projects from 25 years of practice together with commentary from their peers and academics allowing readers to explore the contribution of TCL to our progress towards reconciliation with the Australian landscape. As curators, Professors Gini Lee and SueAnne Ware were 'adamant that the publication would be more than a visual record of the projects' and, while they've succeeded, even if they hadn't the



images would still tell a powerful story. While we still mourn Kevin's untimely loss, his presence remains in the partnership, the trust engendered by the partnership, and the projects presented here. This is a wonderful milestone for TCL as a firm and especially for the contributions of Kevin Taylor, Kate Cullity, and Perry Lethlean to landscape architecture.

### Stephen Forbes

Director, Botanic Gardens of South Australia

Laura Mayer, *Humphry Repton*, Shire Publications, Oxford, 2014 (ISBN 9780747812944): paperback, 64 pp, RRP £6.99

One of the joys of the Shire Publications garden history series is that scholarly content is not sacrificed in the typically slender, concise format. The initial Shire book on Repton, by Kay Sanecki, was published forty years ago. Sanecki, the first Secretary of the Garden History Society, researched Repton's work at Ashridge Estate, one of the 'Places to Visit' along with 'Further Reading' thoughtfully included by Laura Mayer in the 2014 reappraisal.

Laura Mayer's engaging prose is lively and informative, bringing Humphry Repton (1752–1818), the person and his aspirational craving for social success, to the fore. Dr Mayer, who was the recipient of the 2010 Garden History Society Annual Essay Prize, succinctly deals with the tension between Repton's early choice of reinventing park-like landscapes in the style of Brown and the increasing taste for the

Picturesque. Her discussion of the famous 'Red Books' mentions some unintended consequences. So effective was the plan presented to owners that Repton was often excluded from the implementation of his grand schemes providing an explanation as to why some of his designs, such as that at Woburn Abbey, seem fragmented in execution.

Repton's advocacy late in his career for more formal gardens, treillage, and other structures closer to the house contributed to an emerging new garden aesthetic. J.C. Loudon developed and defined this style as the Gardenesque in 1832. Although Mayer quotes Loudon's first use of the term Gardenesque she elevates Repton's part in it. An Australian image—the orange garden at Ripponlea (1880), with its layout reminiscent Repton's later schemes for enclosed flowers gardens—demonstrates her argument and the reach of Repton's writings on landscape gardening and landscape architecture, particularly the consolidated edition introduced and published by Loudon in 1840.

This book is ideally suited for readers seeking an introduction to Repton's work but can be equally enjoyed by jaded historians for its refreshing view of one of the stars of late 18th century British garden history. Mayer's writing style brings Repton into the present. With his painterly approach to presenting the design possibilities of a landscape to his clients, one can't help wondering how much Humphry Repton would have loved CAD (computer-aided design).

Colleen Morris



*The Gardener's Garden* (Phaidon, RRP \$95), due out on 27 October, is the latest global compendium—see our full review in the next issue

Illustration: Ayrlies, Auckland, New Zealand, the late twentieth century garden of Beverley and Malcolm McConnell

# Recent releases

Brent Elliott, *Occasional Papers from The RHS Lindley Library, Volume Nine: The development and present state of garden history*, The Royal Horticultural Society, London, 2013 (ISSN 20430477): paperback, 124pp, RRP £7.50 (also available as a free download from the RHS website)

Whilst many of us profess to be interested in garden history, far fewer might perhaps have given the history of garden history much thought, yet as Brent Elliott shows in this excellent publication, our interests draw on long and rich precedents. With unmatched experience as the Royal Horticultural Society's Lindley Librarian, Elliott takes us back to the eighteenth century, and weaves a compelling tale as he progresses through the inclusions and biases of our field. With sections as diverse as 'Garden history as stylistic propaganda' and 'Changing fashions in the study of history', we are given an expert analysis by an acknowledged master.

Bob Gibbons, *Wildflower Wonders: The 50 best wildflower sites in the world*, Bloomsbury, London, 2014 (ISBN 9781472909824): paperback, 192pp, RRP \$35

This paperback edition of *Wildflower Wonders* (first published in 2011 by New Holland) showcases some of the most spectacular displays of wild flowers on the planet—including two examples from Western Australia. In addition to immense visual pleasure for the vicarious wildflower seeker through its spectacular photography of natural scenery—some of which could have been designed by innovative designers of naturalistic planting such as Piet Oudolf or Noel Kingsbury—(see Mount Rainier, Washington or the grasslands of old Saxon Transylvania, just for example), the book offers practical information on species, natural history, and botanical tours (mostly UK-based companies) for those who wish to get amongst it.

Marion Harney, *Place-making for the Imagination: Horace Walpole and Strawberry Hill*, Ashgate, Farnham, Surrey, England, 2013 (ISBN 9781409470045): hardback, 326pp, illustrated, RRP £55—also available as an eBook PDF (ISBN 9781409470052) and an ebook-ePUB (ISBN 9781409470069)

Based on doctoral research, this well-illustrated book provides new analysis of Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill, encompassing his extraordinary

mid-eighteenth century house, garden, and collection at Twickenham on London's Thames River. Harney takes as her thesis the idea that Walpole was influenced by ideas of association and imagination, especially as earlier articulated in Joseph Addison's celebrated *Spectator* articles 'The Pleasures of the Imagination' (1712). Rather than seeing Strawberry Hill as some grotesque Gothick precursor to later, more strident and archaeologically correct Gothic Revival, Harney argues for a reappraisal of Walpole's ensemble as a carefully integrated and philosophically cogent representation of his aesthetic beliefs.

Jenny Kidd, Sam Cairns, Alex Drago, Amy Ryall, Miranda Stearn (eds), *Challenging History in the Museum: international perspectives*, Ashgate, Farnham, Surrey, England, 2014 (ISBN 9781409467243): hardback, 256pp, RRP £60—also available as an ebook-PDF (ISBN 9781409467250) and an ebook-ePUB (ISBN 9781409467267)

This book of essays embraces wide definitions for museum and challenging history and this is signalled by the breadth and diversity of backgrounds and agendas of its contributors. While the essays do not deal expressly with historic gardens they speak directly to significant historic places and cultural artefacts. As such, the critical appraisals of new attempts to tell uncomfortable histories, exploration of how to offer alternative means of engagement with historic sites, and questions about how stories might be told from different perspectives are worthy of close attention by those whose interests encompass the study, conservation, management, and interpretation of significant historic gardens and cultural landscapes.

Louise Wickham, *Gardens in History: a political perspective*, Windgather Press, Oxford, 2012 (ISBN 9781905119431): paperback, 288 pages, RRP £29.95

*Gardens in History* contains ten chapters, chronologically arranged, each with a well-known case study (Hadrian's Villa, Taj Mahal, Villa Pratolino, Versailles, Stowe, and their ilk), remarkably well illustrated in colour for an academic work such as this, and refreshingly free of the tortured prose that sometimes passes for scholarship. The politics of garden making is a subject yet to be fully explored in Australia, and until it is, a full picture of our garden heritage cannot be adequately understood.



# Dialogue

## Grasslands

In the contemporary bustle of our capital cities, few of us can conceive how the landscape appeared prior to European settlement. From 11 October to 23 November artist Linda Tegg orchestrates *Grasslands*—billed as ‘a grand mediation on nature versus culture’—at the State Library of Victoria. Working with experts from Burnley, Tegg has selected a plethora of specially grown native grasses and other plants to restore the Library’s imposing forecourt an imagined primordial wilderness. *Grasslands* is the result of a Georges Mora Foundation Fellowship at the State Library of Victoria.

[melbournefestival.com.au/grass](http://melbournefestival.com.au/grass)

## World Environmental History Congress

Garden historians were amongst more than 500 participants at the recent 2nd World Congress of Environmental History held in the beautiful World Heritage listed city of Guimarães in northern Portugal. Participants from the physical and social sciences, environmental humanities, conservation, and heritage fields gathered from across the globe to share research interests, establish new collaborative partnerships, and rekindle old friendships.

Environmental history according to Donald Worster (who was present at the Congress) deals with ‘the interaction between human cultures and the environment in the past’. J. Donald Hughes (also present) has defined it as ‘history that seeks understanding of human beings as they have lived, worked and thought in relationship to the rest of nature through the changes brought by time’, drawing on ‘ecological analysis as a means of understanding human history’. The expansive range of themes, geographies and issues represented in the program demonstrated just how vital, relevant and multidisciplinary this relatively new field of history has become.

A number of key themes emerged during the course of the five days: climate history and climate change; the environmental effects of war; environmental justice; the exploitation of resource, energy, and water in agricultural systems; nature and landscape conservation; pests and weeds; challenges in urban environments; and new directions in marine environmental history to name a few. Several sessions focused on

garden history, designed landscapes, and botanical resources, with subjects as diverse as medicinal plants in New Zealand, the introduction of willow trees to the Australian landscape, old world crops in Suriname (Dutch Guiana), the victory garden movement in the United States, and the introduction of acacias and eucalypts in Portugal.

The congress, hosted by the University of Minho and the International Consortium of Environmental History Organisations, included keynote addresses from engineer, physicist and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Professor Mohan Munasinghe, and acclaimed Australian artist Mandy Martin whose evocative paintings of the ecologically fragile landscapes of inland Australia transcended national and cultural borders—there seemed to be few dry eyes in the room at the end of Mandy’s talk. The next World Congress of Environmental History is proposed for 2019.

**Dr Joy McCann**

Centre for Environmental History  
Australian National University

Continued page 32

### Further reading

J. Donald Hughes, *An Environmental History of the World: humankind’s changing role in the community of life*, Routledge, London, 2001.

J. Donald Hughes, *What is environmental history?*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2006.

Donald Worster, *The Ends of the Earth: Perspectives on modern environmental history*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988.

Part of the Australian and New Zealand line up of speakers at the recent 2nd World Congress of Environmental History: (from left) Joslin Moore, Ruth Morgan, Jo Bishop, and Christina Dyson  
Photo: Richard Aitken



# Profile: Elaine Lawson

Gardens have always been part of my life. Memories of a grandmother wearing an enormous hat and cut-off lisle stockings on her arms to prevent sunburn while she braved the searing South Australian summers; of an extraordinary triple grafted plum tree; of the much-regretted removal of a huge date palm in the centre of a carriage turning circle to make way for a 1950s rose garden are all vivid even sixty years later. At an early age I realised that change is the only gardening constant.

After graduating from Adelaide University with an honours degree in Anglo-Saxon and Medieval Literature, relevant employment looked uncertain but I fell into a job as literary assistant and general factotum for Geoffrey Dutton and his wife Nin at Anlaby, an hour north of Adelaide. The homestead garden by this time (1966) was a rampant wilderness. In its heyday it had been tended by 14 gardeners, and had the full gamut of glasshouses, apple house, orchid house, orchards, roses, rockery, and all the features of a very stylish late Victorian garden. Every now and then the Duttons embarked on a huge burst of weeding and pruning—in which I participated with more enthusiasm than expertise—but with little impact, as their real interests were elsewhere. But I still remember the excitement of finding tile-edged paths beneath a tangle of roses and oxalis. I also realised then that without a plan and without commitment the garden would become more and more overgrown and more difficult to retrieve. (The present owners are committed to a full restoration, and it is progressing steadily and well.)

Marriage took me to another garden, Padthaway, in the south east of South Australia, where wool

boom exuberance had resulted in the redecoration of the 1880s house and the 'modernisation' of the garden. Edwardian gravel pathways and symmetrical beds were replaced with sweeps of lawn, Italian cypresses, and false acacias underplanted with spring bulbs. Edna Walling may have visited the garden in the 1950s because there is a tantalising aerial photo of the garden marked 'Miss Walling's copy', but no other evidence exists, and there are none of her signature plantings. Ellis Stones had some input however, and he and his daughter Patricia built the stone walls which still stand. My husband, Richard Lawson remembers the Stones' delight in taking part in rabbit drives that were part of country life in the 1950s. While I was living at Padthaway, although the garden was my mother-in-law's province, I became increasingly interested in its history, especially after reading family diaries with many garden references.

We moved to Canberra in 1981 and I began working for the heritage section of the ACT Government as a consultant. My first project was to recreate a fernery at Lanyon homestead. In a roundabout way this led to my joining the staff, and I eventually became senior curator of historic places for the Cultural Facilities Corporation, where I was responsible for the conservation and management of Lanyon, a mid-Victorian pastoral property with associated outbuildings and garden; Calthorpes' House, a virtually intact 1927 suburban house and garden; and Mugga-Mugga, a shepherds cottage with remnant garden. The 1980s were dream years for both building and garden conservation. Conservation plans were a new discipline, and we loved them! They injected



Elaine Lawson  
in her garden at  
Nimmitabel on the  
Monaro.  
Photo: Richard Lawson



rigor, authenticity, and integrity into a field sadly lacking in all three, and provided a framework for planning and funding. It was at this time that I first joined the Australian Garden History Society.

Like so many country gardens, Lanyon has many layers, and they relate to circumstances, generations, and change of ownership. Photographic and other documentary evidence have all guided the ongoing management of the garden, but serendipitous moments occur! One of these happened when I was walking through the garden with an elderly woman who had stayed at Lanyon in the 1920s. When we came to the long wall, which divided the garden from the working areas, she asked why we didn't have a picking garden there. Of course the answer was that we just didn't know about it! Once planted, it became such an obvious spot—protected, north facing, and well drained on a slight slope.

The garden at Calthorpes' House survived through benign neglect. It simply became too difficult for Mrs Calthorpe to maintain, so when the property was acquired in 1984, the original design was unchanged. The physical evidence combined with the excellent conservation plan and the memories of the two daughters made the re-creation of the garden relatively straightforward, and the policy is that nothing is planted in the garden unless there is documentary or oral evidence. Similarly the remnant garden at Mugga-Mugga survived because the fence was sufficiently intact to keep sheep and horses out, and there was never anything more than a few rows of annuals, geraniums in pots and tins, and scattered lilacs. Important elements were the lack of grass and the well-swept dirt paths. One of the greatest difficulties in this project was curbing the enthusiasm of volunteers who wanted to 'improve' the garden.

Leaving Canberra and returning to farming in a small way provided an opportunity to continue with my interest in houses and gardens. I have been on the Board of Australia's Open Garden Scheme (now Open Gardens Australia), on the Council of the Australiana Fund, a trustee of both the Historic Houses Trust of NSW and The Official Establishments Trust, and continue to be involved in various heritage projects and local community groups. By joining the National Management Committee of the Australian Garden History Society I hope to be able to share some of the experience that has been acquired over a long period of time and over a wide range of projects.

## CRAFTING VENICE GLORY, GLASS, GONDOLAS

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## Eminent Professor lectures in Sydney and Melbourne

**Sydney Keynote Address:** The National body of the Society, including the Sydney and Northern NSW Branch, is thrilled to be one of the sponsors supporting the Keynote Address by John Dixon Hunt, Professor Emeritus of Landscape Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania and the former Director of Studies in Landscape Architecture at Dumbarton Oaks, at The University of Sydney's conference 'Ideas and Enlightenment' as part of the XVth David Nichol Smith (DNS) Seminar in Eighteenth-Century Studies on Wednesday, 10 December 2014. Professor Hunt's Sydney lecture is entitled 'Fruit from the "Inlightened" Tree: The Royal Society, History and the Picturesque'. To book to attend the Keynote Address and for a full description of the lecture please visit:

<http://sydney.edu.au/intellectual-history/news-events/dns-conference-2014.shtml>

Dr Stephen Bending is also delivering a DNS Keynote Address entitled 'Pleasure Gardens and the Problems of Pleasure'. Dr Bending is a Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Southampton and his many publications include editorship of the Enlightenment volume of Bloomsbury's *A Cultural History of Gardens* (2013).

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Continued from page 29

## Economic Botany Today

The Botanic Gardens of South Australia is presenting *Economic Botany Today: a study of practical ecological biochemistry for humans*, a series of six lectures on 27–28 October 2014 delivered by Professor David Mabberley. The course will provide a deep understanding of plants, how they have shaped our past, and how they can impact on our future.

<http://www.botanicgardens.sa.gov.au>

## Correction

Our apologies to Nancy Clarke, a co-contributor to 'Victor Crittenden OAM (1925–2014)' in *Australian Garden History* 26 (1), pp. 24–26, for incorrectly spelling her surname.

**Melbourne lecture:** Additionally the National body of the Society, including the Victorian Branch, is proud to be one of the sponsors (alongside the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, The University of Melbourne, and The Botanic Gardens Australia and New Zealand network) of John Dixon Hunt's Melbourne presentation, 'The Lie of the Land', to be held at The University of Melbourne on Friday, 5 December 2014. Bookings are essential (03) 5990 2200.

More information at <http://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/whats-on>

John Dixon Hunt is the author of numerous articles and books on garden history and theory, including a catalogue of the landscape drawings of William Kent, *Garden and Grove* (1986), *Gardens and the Picturesque* (1992), *The Picturesque Garden in Europe* (2002), *The Afterlife of Gardens* (2004), and *A World of Gardens* (2012), as well as editor of the journal *Studies in the History of Gardens and Designed Landscapes*.

## Royal Park advocacy

Just as the previous issue of *Australian Garden History* went to press, the Victorian Minister for Planning released his decision regarding the East West Link (EWL) project proposed for Melbourne. As reported in earlier issues of AGH, this road tunnel project threatened to destroy a significant portion of Melbourne's Royal Park which has recently been recommended for listing on the Victorian Heritage Register by the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria. Earlier this year, former AGHS Chairman, Dr John Dwyer QC, represented the AGHS at the Public Hearing about the EWL project, in support of protecting the cultural heritage significance of Royal Park. The combination of community support such as that provided by the AGHS at the public hearing, alongside technical arguments and alternatives proposed by representatives of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, the City of Melbourne and their expert witnesses, has resulted in an improved outcome for Royal Park; specifically, the deletion of the large interchange originally proposed to pierce the very core of the Park. While the next stages for this project remain unresolved, these collective efforts proved crucial in improving the proposal for the benefit of present and future generations.



# Diary dates

## OCTOBER 2014

**Sunday 12** Tasmanian Bushland Garden, Buckland, and Runnymede **TASMANIA**

Guided tour of the Bushland Garden showcasing plants from eastern Tasmania (established in the 2000s), followed by lunch (BYO) and a tour of the garden at Runnymede. Meet 10.30am, the Bushland Garden. See Branch webpage for more details. Contact: Naomi Jeffs at [Naomi.Jeffs@portarthur.org.au](mailto:Naomi.Jeffs@portarthur.org.au)

**Friday 17–Monday 20** AGHS Annual Nation Conference, Albany, Western Australia

The Australian Garden History Society's 35th Annual National Conference will be held in Albany, WA, 17–20 October 2014.

## NOVEMBER 2014

**Sunday 2** Jum Jum garden, Yarramalong Valley **SYDNEY AND NORTHERN NSW**

A special visit to Jill Wran's lovely country garden in a beautiful sylvan setting: in high spring flush, hopefully with irises in full flower. Details provided on booking and also in the October issue of *Branch Cuttings*. Bookings essential, to Jeanne Villani on (02) 9997 5995 or [Jeanne@Villani.com](mailto:Jeanne@Villani.com)

**Saturday 8** The Pear Walk, Lalla **TASMANIA**

A beautiful garden, set in thirty acres of lush countryside. Meet at The Pear Walk, Lalla, 11am for morning tea. The garden tour will start at 12.15pm, followed by lunch (BYO) in the garden. Cost: \$10 members, \$15 non-members. Property address and further details on the Branch webpage. Contacts: Bruce Chetwynd at [bgaltc@internode.on.net](mailto:bgaltc@internode.on.net), Liz Kerry (after 27 November) at [liz.kerry@keypoint.com.au](mailto:liz.kerry@keypoint.com.au)

**Wednesday 12–Thursday 13** Gippsland Glories: from McMillian to Guilfoyle **VICTORIA**

Coach tour exploring the gardens of Gippsland from the pioneers to early 20th century, with guest speaker Meredith Fletcher; and guides John Hawker and Peter Synan. Meet 8.30am, National Gallery of Victoria. Cost: \$350 members, \$422 non-members (single supplement \$50). For further details and bookings please see the Branch webpage. For enquiries please phone or email Fran and Mal Faul 9853 1369, [malfaul@alphalink.com.au](mailto:malfaul@alphalink.com.au)

**Saturday 15** Spring gardens day, Kangaloon **SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS**

Spring gardens day at Kangaloon in conjunction with Kangaloon Primary School. Enquiries to Lyn Esdaile at [aghs.sh.info@gmail.com](mailto:aghs.sh.info@gmail.com)

**Saturday 22** Working bee at Yallambie, Lower Plenty **VICTORIA**

This is the former Plenty Station, where Edward Latrobe Bateman executed a number of sketches and influenced the early garden. Mature trees and a two-storey Victorian house are embellished by a simple garden. Contact Fran on 9853 1369 or email [malfaul@alphalink.com.au](mailto:malfaul@alphalink.com.au) for more details.

**Sunday 30** Christmas party **SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

Save the date. Details will be confirmed in the Branch newsletter.

**Dates tbc** Tasmanian tour **QUEENSLAND**

A trip to Tasmania in the spring, conducted by Ann Wegener and Graham Hesse. Please check the Branch webpage for details.

## DECEMBER 2014

**Friday 5** Christmas party **SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS**

Christmas party at Retford Park. Enquiries to Lyn Esdaile on [aghs.sh.info@gmail.com](mailto:aghs.sh.info@gmail.com)

**Friday 5****John Dixon Hunt lecture in Melbourne**

NMC &amp; VICTORIA

Esteemed garden historian John Dixon Hunt will present a lecture in Melbourne at The University of Melbourne. Bookings are essential (03) 5990 2200. More information at <http://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/whats-on>

**Saturday 6****Christmas event**

QUEENSLAND

Christmas event at the home of Glenn Cooke. Please check the Branch webpage for details.

**Sunday 7****Christmas function**

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Our Christmas function is to be held at a venue yet to be decided. Of course the Chairman's Quiz will be a highlight! See the Branch webpage for updates.

**Wednesday 10****John Dixon Hunt keynote address: 'Fruit from the "Inlightened" Tree: The Royal Society, History and the Picturesque' NMC & SYDNEY & NORTHERN NSW**

John Dixon Hunt will present the keynote address at The University of Sydney's conference Ideas and Enlightenment, as part of the XVth David Nichol Smith Seminar in Eighteenth-Century Studies. Bookings are essential to attend the keynote address. More information at <http://sydney.edu.au/intellectual-history/news-events/dns-conference-2014.shtml>

**Wednesday 10****Christmas walk and talk**

VICTORIA

Join us at Victoria Gardens, High Street Prahran. 6pm for a BYO Picnic Dinner. John Hawker, former president of the Friends of Victoria Gardens will be our guide for the evening.

Continued from page 16

heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest rather than some incontrovertible truth. In other words, we as people are to collectively apply our own judgment in deciding what is heritage we want to protect—grassroots power of the people again.

And how do I find it, this new historic landscape conservation world in which we have many friends all sharing big horizons? Well, although there are moments when I miss being able to have a direct conservation impact myself, working with people is always intensely rewarding. The Gardens Trusts volunteers are an impressively motivated, upbeat, and informed bunch. It is so inspiring to see how willing they are to invest huge amounts of their own time and energy, with no

financial reward, into some pretty major demands that the heritage sector is now putting on them. Our sector has been through—nay is still going through—some challenging times, but we are coming out of it leaner, more streamlined, brighter, and certainly more unified in our endeavour to work together.

**Linden Groves** 'found' historic landscapes whilst working on the international magazine *Historic Gardens Review* before joining the Garden History Society as a Conservation Officer and then Historic Landscape Project Officer. She believes passionately that one of the best ways to protect and conserve historic landscapes is by engaging people to value and understand them and so also runs a small business, Hahahopscotch, to involve children in historic parks and gardens.



Historic Landscape Project training day for County Gardens Trusts and local planning authorities on 'Significance', at Stourhead in Wiltshire, in June 2014, led by Linden Groves and Andy Brown of English Heritage. Courtesy Historic Landscape Project





Colleen Morris

Jack Munday, Head Lightkeeper from 1956 to 1960 and a keen vegetable gardener, is pictured right attending his pea crop and giant silver beet. On the left, his wife Marg is at the hand pump (removed from the Island c.1970) with Val Lalor behind. Munday Family Collection, Courtesy NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service

## Montague Island vegetable garden restoration project

Montague Island is located on the southern coast of New South Wales, 9 km off shore to the east of Narooma. The island's lighthouse and residences, one of the eastern seaboard's most isolated lighthouse complexes, were designed by the Colonial Architect James Barnet and built between 1880 and 1881. The island, accessed primarily by boat, operated as a manned light station until 1986 when the lighthouse became fully automated. It was Australia's first National Trust property, declared protected as a flora and fauna sanctuary in 1953. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) took over management of the island in 1987.

A Conservation Management Plan for Montague Island was prepared in 2009, with further research on the kitchen garden recommended. In 2013 the ACT, Monaro, Riverina Branch with funding support from the national body of AGHS commissioned a plan to reinstate and better interpret the former kitchen garden that was tended by the lighthouse keepers, their assistants and families.

Research into vegetable gardens and common 'everyday' gardening in general is hampered by the paucity of information available. Reporting on the activity in the kitchen garden was not required as part of the official record and few visitors came to comment on the gardens or vegetation of the island. Aerial photographs and transcripts of oral histories of former residents previously commissioned by NPWS and family photographs which had been copied in that process were therefore crucial in building up a picture of what the garden had been.

One of the challenges faced by garden historians when formulating policies is to produce practical guidelines with achievable outcomes. For this project staff and time are limited and considerable effort is required to convert the site to a safe working environment prior to the reinstatement of a garden. AGHS volunteers will assist with the reinstatement but long-term maintenance will primarily be the responsibility of NPWS officers.





On windswept and rocky Montague Island regular supply of stores was uncertain and vegetable growing became an essential adjunct to the basics that came by boat. This view back toward the lighthouse precinct shows remaining sections of the garden with recycled corrugated iron fences providing essential protection from the elements. Photo: Colleen Morris

The aim of the reinstatement of the kitchen garden is to interpret a past way of life—the lightkeepers of Montague Island in particular and lightkeepers around the coast of NSW and Australia more generally. Part of the way of life was to ‘make do’ with the materials at hand.

The area that was used for kitchen garden purposes is relatively large. While interpreting the earlier extent of the garden, from the analysis of the history of the garden, the best surviving physical evidence for the area to be reinstated is that which dates from the 1970s. Under the current operational situation this is a more suitable size from a management perspective. It would also be possible to interpret the known larger extent of garden by mass planting with a crop such as sweet potato or pumpkin.

Under the NSW Heritage Act there are archaeological constraints on the site. However photographic evidence indicates that the vegetable beds were edged or slightly raised. To interpret this and to avoid excessive disturbance of the underlying soils, the planted vegetable beds will be raised and constructed from materials recycled from the site. Another matter that required consideration was that some wider paths

within the garden would be required for guided tours rather than the 2 ft. (60cm) wide paths that were common in vegetable gardens. Watering the garden was always a concern for residents. While metal watering cans and hopefully a hand pump similar to that seen in old photographs will be used in interpretation, a diesel pump attached to the well in the garden and a tap will render the process more efficient. In this circumstance the guidelines for installation have specific criteria to ensure the visual impact of new elements is minimised.

A list of vegetables and flowers named in accounts since 1932 was cross-matched with varieties or cultivars grown at the relevant period and with lists of seeds that are still available. The result is a list of seeds that can be easily utilised by those implementing the plan.

One of the most inspiring aspects of this project is that local school children are propagating the vegetables from seed and will plant the garden with AGHS volunteers. Ambitions for a practical outcome based on historical research have been enhanced by the vision of Cassandra Bendixsen, the NPWS Discovery Coordinator for Montague Island, to engage young members of the local community.



## Mission Statement

The Australian Garden History Society is the leader in concern for and conservation of significant cultural landscapes and historic gardens through committed, relevant and sustainable action.